

**Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Alison Broom, Chief Executive
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Alison Broom, Chief Executive
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

This report identifies specific action to respond to the council's recently adopted Strategic Plan and specifically the priority to "embrace growth and enable infrastructure". Following officer discussions between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council proposals for the purpose, aims and membership of a strategic board, which would consider infrastructure requirements and delivery, are put forward and the Committee's views are sought to inform the council's preferred position.

**Purpose of Report**

To consult the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on the terms of reference and the Maidstone Borough Council representatives for the new Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That:

1. The agreement between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to establish a Board with the purpose of jointly working on strategic projects be noted.
2. The proposed arrangements for the Board including its purpose, aims and membership as set out in section 2 be agreed, for the purpose of discussion at the first meeting of the Board.
3. Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make changes to the proposed arrangements and agreement of terms of reference with other members of the Board, namely Kent County Council and Maidstone Members of Parliament, in consultation with the Chair and

Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Chair of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee.

4. The Maidstone representatives on the Board be; the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, the Chair of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, the Chief Executive and the Director of Regeneration and Place.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	July 9 <sup>th</sup> 2019

# Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure". We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Chief Executive
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of all the crosscutting objectives inasmuch as they depend on infrastructure being provided or improved.	Chief Executive
<b>Risk Management</b>	This is covered in section 5 of the report.	Chief Executive
<b>Financial</b>	<p>The proposals set out in the recommendations to establish the Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Board, participate and administer it, can be accommodated within existing resources.</p> <p>The existence of the Board has the potential to improve the quantum and timeliness of investment in infrastructure in the borough.</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Chief Executive
<b>Legal</b>	Following the recommendation will achieve compliance with a recent court settlement and promote the ongoing collaboration of Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council in strategic infrastructure matters to the benefit of the borough.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no privacy or data protection issues arising from the proposals for a Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board	Chief Executive
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Public</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that	Public Health

<b>Health</b>	of individuals.	Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the proposals for a Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board.	Chief Executive
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no immediate Procurement implications. Commissioning and procurement of infrastructure projects arising from the work of the Strategic Board will follow the Council's existing Contract Procedure Rules.	Section 151 Officer

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Maidstone Borough Strategic Plan was adopted by Full Council in December 2018. It sets out the long-term vision, priorities and outcomes for Maidstone borough for the period to 2045. The council has also identified topics of particular importance to achieving the vision and outcomes for the period 2019-24. One of the four key priorities is to "Embrace Growth and enable infrastructure". In order to deliver the outcome of having sufficient infrastructure to meet the demands of growth the council has agreed to place particular importance in the short and medium term on working with partners to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered.
- 2.2 The scope of responsibilities for Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) committees was reviewed during 2018/19 and as a result of the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan some changes were made. Specifically relevant to enabling the delivery of infrastructure the council has now in place the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee which has the lead responsibility for the Strategic Plan objective of "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure". This Committee works with the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee with the latter having responsibility for the allocation of resources by means of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which includes the council's capital investment programme.
- 2.3 In March 2019 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) agreed with Kent County Council (KCC) to establish a strategic board to facilitate discussion by both authorities and other relevant partners on the major strategic projects affecting the borough and that the terms of reference would be established by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. A key objective for this board is to improve collaboration and therefore the delivery of infrastructure in the borough to address historical deficits plus changing and growing needs as the demography of the borough changes and our population and economy grow.
- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to consult the SPI Committee with respect to the nature of the board, its responsibilities and how Maidstone Borough Council is represented on it. Discussions have been held between MBC and KCC officers about the role, aims and membership for the strategic

board – which together would form the terms of reference. This Committee is invited to feedback on the product of these discussions which is set out below.

2.5 It is suggested that the name of the board would be the Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Collaboration Board (MSICB), that it would be an advisory board which meets in public at least quarterly. Support would be provided by democratic services teams and notes of board meetings would be published.

2.6 The role of the board would be to respond to contemporary and anticipate future strategic infrastructure needs including those arising from land-use/development, environmental quality issues and the community's health and well-being, transport and digital communications needs.

2.6.1 The aims of the board would be to

- Achieve consensus in the identification, development and delivery of key infrastructure in the borough
- Work collaboratively on specific strategies and projects within the locus of KCC and MBC including for transport, air quality, education and community infrastructure
- Engage and work with relevant infrastructure providers including the Environment Agency, Highways England, Network Rail, the NHS and utilities to shape and help deliver infrastructure in the borough
- Engage with funding bodies to promote strategic infrastructure needed in the borough
- Seek resolution of issues that prevent the successful implementation of infrastructure in the borough
- Provide recommendations to the key decision makers at KCC and MBC to enable consistent joined up decision making
- Monitor how investment plans and projects meet and deliver the agreed strategic infrastructure objectives and priorities

The board would be recognised as the official forum for both KCC and MBC to discharge their "duty to cooperate" obligations under the MBC Local Plan Review (LPR)

2.7 The membership proposed is similar to the model already in place for the Maidstone East Strategic Board in that it would include both elected members and officers; for this board it is also proposed that both Maidstone MPs are also members and they are supportive of this approach. The proposed membership is -

- 3 elected members from Kent County Council
- 3 elected members from Maidstone Borough Council
- MP for Maidstone and the Weald
- MP for Faversham and Mid Kent
- 2 KCC senior officers
- 2 MBC senior officers

Substitutes should be at a suitably senior level.

- 2.8 It is proposed that the elected members on the board from Maidstone Borough Council should be the Chair and Vice Chair of P&R Committee and the Chair of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee. This would have the benefit of providing strategic oversight from and to the P&R Committee and topic specific strategic input from and to the SPI Committee arising from its responsibilities for, amongst other things, the Local Plan Review and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy. The council's Constitution identifies that the Leader amongst other things has responsibility for building and delivering the Council's vision, co-ordinating policies, building political consensus around council priorities and fostering partnerships. The inclusion of the Vice Chair has the potential of strengthening the council's ability to do this. The Chair of the SPI Committee has responsibility for, amongst other things, representing the council on all partnerships relevant to the committee and taking a lead role within the committee for relationships with funders including Kent County Council.
- 2.9 It is proposed that the two MBC officers attending the board should be the Chief Executive and the Director for Regeneration and Place – as is the case for the Maidstone East Strategic Board. Other officers would contribute their expertise depending on the topic under consideration.
- 2.10 It is proposed that the board is chaired by an elected member from KCC or MBC for a period of 12 months and this will be alternated. The alternate authority will provide the Vice Chair.
- 2.11 The Committee will be aware that a Joint Transport Board already exists and amongst other things has a remit for providing advice on Maidstone's transport strategy. It is suggested that the work of the MSICB would complement that of the Maidstone Joint Transport Board with the latter taking responsibility for transport and highways capital and revenue works programmes, traffic regulation orders and street management issues. Responsibility for advising MBC and KCC with respect to Local Transport Strategy would reside with the MSICB in the future.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 **Do Nothing:** current arrangements are effective to some degree in delivering a joined-up approach to identifying and delivering infrastructure.

MBC and KCC have collaborated well for example to secure investment from the National Productivity Investment Fund for highway improvements and from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for improvements to transport infrastructure including to Maidstone East station and the Bridges Gyratory.

However, there have also been some significant challenges in establishing a common set of objectives and aligning the work of our councils for example in discharging our responsibilities as the local planning authority (MBC) and the highway authority (KCC) as experienced at the Local Plan Examination and the decision by MBC to lodge a Judicial Review challenge concerning highway infrastructure. These circumstances demonstrate a clear need to improve and embed collaboration so that we can better achieve the outcomes in the Maidstone Strategic Plan. There is an appetite from both authorities to do so via establishing a strategic board. It is therefore concluded that to Do Nothing would not be the best way forward.

- 3.2 **Establish a Strategic Board** – the merits and potential positive consequences arising from this option are set out in section 2 above.
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#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is to establish a strategic board as set out in section 2 above.
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#### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks to achieving the council's strategic objectives arising from ineffective partnership working are identified in the Corporate Risk Register. Establishing a strategic board has the potential to mitigate this risk and improve the likelihood of positive progress in enabling infrastructure for the benefit of the community.

#### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to consult the SPI Committee with respect to the details of role, aims and membership for a strategic board to enable better collaboration and thereby more effectively secure infrastructure for the borough.
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#### **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The views of the Committee will be taken forward as Maidstone Borough Council's preferred position concerning the role and operational arrangements for the proposed strategic board with KCC and the Maidstone MPs. Delegated authority is requested for the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairs of the Policy and Resources and Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committees to bring the matter to a point of agreement with the other participants.
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#### **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None

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**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None